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Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SAJ-01 CIAE-00

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R 090036Z NOV 74
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4461
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 7349

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR,NUALR, ENRG, EMIN, TGEN, AS, JA
SUBJECT: GOA AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN'S COMMENTS ON TANAKA'S VISIT

REF: CANBERRA'S 7286; 7287; 7315; 7316 (NOTAL)

1. MICK SHANN, GOA AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN, GAVE ME FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON JAPANESE PRIMIN TANAKA'S VISIT, JUST CONCLUDED, PRIOR TO SHANN'S RETURN NOV. 8 FOR TOKYO:

2. TANAKA'S VISIT WAS A COMPLETE SUCCESS. DESPITE JAPANESE APPREHENSIONS, DERIVING FROM INCIDENTS DURING PREVIOUS TANAKA VISITS TO JAKARTA AND BANGKOK, THERE HAD BEEN NO UNTOWARD INCIDENTS MARRING THIS VISIT, NO DEMONSTRATIONS OR EVEN CATCALLS, WITH THE AUSTRALIAN PRESS ACTING RESPONSIBLY. THE SUCCESS OF AUSTRALIAN VISIT WAS GIVEN FURTHER GLOSS (FROM SHANN'S
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VIEWPOINT) BY LESS HAPPY OUTCOME IN NEW ZEALAND WHERE PRESS HAD

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TAXED TANAKA ABOUT HOW HE ACQUIRED HIS WEALTH, AND IN BURMA WHERE THINGS WERE ALL TOO BURMESE.

3. IN SUBSTANTIVE TERMS, BASIC REASONS FOR SUCCESSFUL VISIT WERE: (A) RECENT HEIGHTENED AWARENESS ON PART OF WHITLAM AND HIS CABINET OF KEY POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE TO AUSTRALIA OF LONG-TERM GOOD RELATIONS WITH JAPAN; (B) FACT THAT AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT FINALLY DEFINED AND LIBERALIZED ITS POSITION WITH REGARD TO FOREIGN ACCESS TO AUSTRALIAN ENERGY SOURCES, INCLUDING URANIUM, AND WITH REGARD TO MORE CONSTRUCTIVE VIEW OF ROLE OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN AUSTRALIA; AND ONLY FACT THAT AUSTRALIA AND JAPAN HAD FINALLY WORKED OUT THEIR POSITIONS ON THESE ISSUES ON EVE OF TANAKA'S VISIT.

4. FURTHER PROGRESS ON URANIUM EXPORTS AND POSSIBLE URANIUM ENRICHMENT IN AUSTRALIA INVOLVE JAPANESE RATIFICATION OF NPT WHICH IS LIKELY TO TAKE PLACE SHORTLY AFTER MID-1975. ALTHOUGH JAPANESE ALREADY HAVE LABORATORY CAPABILITY TO PRODUCE ENRICHED ARANIUM, AUSTRALIA AND JAPAN WILL DEPEND UPON THIRD COUNTRY ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY TO SET UP ANY ENRICHMENT PLANT WHICH IS LIKELY TO BE A CENTRIFUGE PROCESS.

5. IN RECENT MONTHS THE JAPANESE HAVE CONSCIOUSLY FLOODED THE AUSTRALIAN MARKET WITH JAPANESE CARS WHICH WILL IMPROVE JAPAN'S BARGAINING POSITION WHEN IT COMES TO SETTING RESTRAINT LEVELS ON JAPANESE EXPORTS. AGREEMENT IS BEING WORKED OUT BETWEEN NISSAN AND CHRYSLER FOR A JOINT OPERATION IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA UTILIZING CHRYSLER'S PLANT. CHRYSLER WELCOMES THIS ARRANGEMENT BECAUSE OTHERWISE IT MAY GO TO THE WALL. (COMMENT: OUR INFORMATION ABOUT CHRYSLER'S POSITION IS THAT, WHILE CHRYSLER OPEN TO PROPOSALS FOR JOINT USE OF SURPLUS PLANT, IT DOES NOT SEEK JAPANESE PROPOSALS AND IS NOT ABOUT TO GO TO THE WALL WITHOUT SUCH JOINT USE.)

W. WHEN WHITLAM VOICED AUSTRALIAN CONCERNS OVER JAPAN'S CURRENT EMBARGO ON AUSTRALIAN MEAT EXPORTS, TANAKA GAVE IMPRESSIVE EXPLANATION OF WHY JAPAN COULD NOT LIFT EMBARGO AT THIS TIME, BUT HOPES TO DO SO EARLY NEXT YEAR. HIS ARGUMENTS WERE LARGELY POLITICAL, INCLUDING FACT THAT ANY CURRENT LIFTING OF EMBARGO WOULD RUN INTO STORM OF OPPOSITION FROM JAPANESE RURAL VOTERS CONFIDENTIAL

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WHOSE REPRESENTATION IN THE DIET IS FIVE TIMES WHAT IT SHOULD BE WERE ALL VOTING CONSTITUENCIES EQUAL IN SIZE.

7. IN CONCLUSION, SHANN FELT THAT THE AGREEMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS WHICH TOOK PLACE DURING TANAKA'S VISIT WILL GO FAR IN PROVIDING JAPAN WITH ASSURED SOURCES OF SUPPLY IN THE YEARS AHEAD WHICH

WILL HELP JAPAN TO CONTINUE TO STEER THE COURSE DESIRED

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BY AUSTRALIA AND THE US. SHANN TOTALLY REJECTS THE THESIS THAT JAPAN MIGHT SOME DAY GO NUCLEAR. IN FACING CONSEQUENCES OF SKYROCKETTING OIL PRICES, JAPAN HAS ONCE AGAIN DEMONSTRATED ITS REMARKABLE RESILIENCE IN OVERCOMING ADVERSITY. ALTHOUGH TANAKA'S SUCCESSFUL VISIT TO AUSTRALIA WILL BE ENORMOUSLY HELPFUL TO JAPAN (AND HELPFUL TO AUSTRALIA), IT WILL NOT IN ITSELF SAVE TANAKA'S OWN POLITICAL HIDE.

8. COMMENT: IN OUR VIEW, SHANN'S ASSESSMENT IS ON THE OPTIMISTIC SIDE, INCLUDING WHAT HE SAID ABOUT FOREIGN INVESTMENT (PARA 3 (B) ABOVE). HOWEVER, WE DO NOT QUESTION FACT THAT TANAKA'S TRIP, AND WHAT IMMEDIATELY PRECEDED THAT TRIP, WAS A DEFINITE PLUS TO AUSTRALIA AND JAPAN AND THEREFORE IN BROAD SENSE ALSO TO UNITED STATES IN THIS VITAL TRIANGULAR RELATIONSHIP.
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